Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

"Don't go off into the bush with a man. A child born to you will have a bad bush god, if you do," she added as an afterthought.

5

In the other corner, Chief And'u, the bassia, and about half a dozen men were talking of the great book about their ancestors which the white man had.

"It is large so," said the chief to one of the older men, indicating an imaginary size which multiplied the size of the actual volume at least tenfold. "And people say it has in it pictures of the Apuku gods, small as we ourselves know them, and a picture of the evil Apuku who appear as fire in the distance. . . . Mati, white men have gone into the Kromanti houses in the country of our ancestors and have made pictures!"

"It is impossible!"

"I want to see!"

The old man said, "I will not look. Books are not for us, mati."

"But mati, the G'aman has heard, and he wants to see."

The old man shook his head. He would have nothing of pictures that figured what should never have been allowed to be photographed.

It seemed prudent to give the conversation a new turn. Down river, the men had said that a man of this village had lately found a new *nɛkɛ* liana. Was it so?

"The man who found it was my son," said the old man, "you should have come for the dance. You would have seen how we do things here in the bush. But pictures you could not take. No, mati, if you photograph, you take the soul."

The festivities for the find had been especially joyful, he explained, for the boy had only recently come by his gods, and this had been yet another proof that he would serve his family capably. For though the find was his own, all his relatives in the mother's line would enjoy its use. Hereafter, when the poison of its leaves and its slender branches

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

881 have a last look at the child's penis, as they will never see it again. Then the boy is proclaimed a man, and given clothes.

So far as could be observed, there is no circumcision of either the male or female, although such mutilations are indulged in by West African tribes in the region from which the Djukas came. The girls wear only the *coyo*, or a larger cloth known as *pangi*, until their first menstruation, when their mothers give them cloths. This is done in private. Menstruating women are required to leave their homes and retire
841 to a separate hut situated outside the village on a by-path; they may not return until three days after the period is over. Under no condition are they allowed to go to the provision fields during this time.

584 At the age of about sixteen or seventeen the children are
[582] ready to be married. Sometimes they are betrothed in infancy, and occasionally a pregnant woman will betroth her child before it is born, conditionally, of course, upon its sex. Once the child is betrothed the ceremony must take place,
[754] otherwise the disappointed prospective mate will call down a *kunu*, or curse, on the entire perjured family, and they will all die. The pubescent child does not look forward to marriage as time for leaving its family, nor is marriage an
[581] initiation into sex relations. For these two reasons, getting
[349] married is not a serious step, and there is little illegitimacy because there is no reason for objecting to a marriage.

858 Youths must rem[illegible]a standing until their elders invite them
576 to be seated. It is customary for older people to receive much
888 respectful attention, for the older people are the sources of tradition and authority

/147 cont./

583 A girl's marriage does not involve any dowry in the African sense of the term, but it involves payment of the price of virginity to the mother. This payment is made after consummation of the marriage (or after defloration if there has been a clandestine union). It consists of seven pieces of cloth, a demijohn of tafia, and various imported objects (the whole representing in 1958 about 8,000 francs, which is relatively small for the Refugee Blacks). It really has to do with the price of virginity, for nothing is paid back if there is a break-up. The man moreover gives the girl white beads /possibly "pearls" --Tr./, red cloth, and sweetmeats which constitute the payment of her akka.

[429] The price of virginity is paid to the person who has raised the girl, even if it is a man. This person divides it equally with the mother or, if the latter is dead, with the mother's sisters.

For example, for O Baïkom (D,u, F10), brought up by her father Malobi in Loka village, her husband Moomu (Kotika) paid the price of virginity to Malobi who shared it with his wife Béniti.

[604] [613] No payment is made to the uncles or to the head of the lineage.

836 [599] The fact that a girl may carry on a clandestine affair and be deflowered without having been properly proposed to is considered a shame for the mother; but if the seducer confesses and pays the price of virginity, honor is restored.

Defloration does not necessarily entail marriage, for the seducer does not always intend to take on the maintenance of a household.

If the girl is deflowered too young, her mother does not give her the pagi and continues to forbid her to have sexual relations, for she fears that she may become pregnant. Now for 848 558 a girl, becoming pregnant without having concluded a contract of maintenance with a man if an extreme shame, for that means she is not worth anything.

/147 cont./

848 If the girl is pregnant, the man may not abandon her: that would make a great to-do between the two kin groups: he must stay with her at least until the birth of the child.

883 836 178 [582] Nowadays among the Boni things tend to happen completely otherwise than custom makes provision for. The general opinion is that girls can no longer be held down, that they escape more and more from the authority of their mothers; many of them begin to run wild at about 14 or 15, and people are obliged to marry them off precipitately at 15 or 16. It is difficult to say what the proportion of these hasty marriages is, but the recriminations heard on all sides on the subject of the shamelessness of girls give the idea that it is increasing. In the [582] villages on the French bank, out of nine girls married in 1958 [848] there were only four marriages concluded according to regulations; the five others had been arranged hastily either because the girl was pregnant (two cases) or because she had laid herself open to scandal. /148/

582 Nearly all girls married between 1952 and 1956 were 15 to 17 years old.

584 This is about how things happen:

A man who is attracted by a girl tries to exchange a few [539] words with her unknown to her mother. There are special forms for these declarations. One speaks in a low voice, very fast, using special formulas. This is how one of our boatmen, one evening in October, 1952, addressed young Lomé, age 15, of Boniville village, who had gotten away from her mother on the pretext of going to get water for us.

584 539 "Woman, I love thee, I wish to live with thee, I wish to marry thee. That which God put in me I cannot take away (1).

1. Which means: I cannot change, you must take me as I am.

/158 cont./

848 If children are born of these irregular liaisons, the mother
[784] takes care to know with certainty who the father is, for if there
[753] were any doubt, the child, respecting a kina which would not be his own, would contract leprosy. On this subject the Boni
842 have a remarkable belief: they think that it is the first man with whom a woman has had relations after the end of a menstrual period who is likely to make her pregnant.

836 These adventures always involve gifts in kind (cloth,
431 jewels); so the men who have the most success with women are always short of money.

581 A woman who has lived thus in notorious fashion has a little more difficulty than another in finding another husband, but if she is young and winsome she succeeds.

548 Prostitution as such is very rare in Boni country, and the women who give themselves over to it openly (three or four for all the villages on the French bank) have generally left the
[836] tribe to settle in the gold miners' villages. Dissoluteness is not considered dishonorable by the Refugee Blacks when it is carried on within the tribe and when it has no other purpose but pleasure; but prostitution is judged shameful.

834 Except for these few prostitutes, we have never heard it
648 said that a Boni woman had relations with a European; on this point tribal discipline is observed with extreme rigor.

581 Conclusion. The average duration of marriages, which was
[178] from 15 to 20 years for the preceding generation, tends to become shorter and can be estimated nowadays at about ten years.
[191] In spite of this evolution, the stability of marriages among the Refugee Blacks remains noticeably greater than that observed
548 among the black populations of South America. Among them is not seen the form of prostitution so widespread in South America, the supported mistress who does not work and who lives entirely at the expense of her successive lovers.